

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3174

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, GR, PEPR
SUBJECT: WASHINGTON NATO SUMMIT; BILATERALS

REF/ STATE 91069

1. BECAUSE I AM AWARE OF THE IMMENSE PRESSURES ON THE
PRESIDENT'S TIME, IF FULLY UNDERSTAND HIS DESIRE TO
MINIMIZE BILATERAL MEETING DURING THE MAY 30-31 NATO SUMMIT.
HOWEVER, THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF A BILATERAL WITH PRIME
MINISTER CARAMANLIS ARE SO COMPELLING, AND THE PROPABLE
COST IN LOST OPPORTUNITIES AND HEIGHTENED RISKS TO U.S.
INTERESTS SO GREAT, I STRONGLY URGE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER MEET
PRIVATELY WITH CARAMANLIS.

2. THE PROPOSAL TO LIFT THE EMBARGO WILL PROBABLY STILL BE
BEFORE CONGRESS AT THE TIME OF THE NATO SUMMIT. CARAMANLIS
WILL BE MEETING WITH PROMINENT GREEK-AMERICANS AND MEM-
BERS OF CONGRESS DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON, AND
SENATOR JAVITS HAS INVITED HIM TO MEET WITH THE SENATE FOREIGN
RELATIONS COMMITTEE, AND INVITATION CARAMANLIS QUICKLY ACCEPTED
IN PRINCIPLE. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SENATORIAL WELCOME AND
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A WHITE HOUSE CLOSED DOOR -- HOWEVER EXPLAINED OR JUSTIFIED --
WOULD NOT ONLY BE UNBECOMING BUT MIGHT ENCOURAGE THE GREEKS
TO PLAY THEIR CONGRESSIONAL CARDS TO THE LIMIT AGAINST THE EXECUTIVE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, A BILATERAL TALK WITH PRESIDENT CARTER
COULD IMPORTANTLY INFLUENCE WHAT THE GREEK LEADER SAYS TO HIS
FRIENDS IN THE GREEK LOBBY AND IN CONGRESS.

3. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GREECE AND THE GOG HAS BEEN BADLY SHAKEN BY THE DECISION TO SEEK THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO. I AM CONVINCED IT WOULD BE A SERIOUS OMISSION IF WE DID NOT USE CARAMANLIS' PRESENCE IN WASHINGTON TO GIVE HIM PERSONAL, DIRECT PRESIDENTIAL REASSURANCES OF OUR DETERMINATION TO PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND, EQUALLY IMPORTANT AT THIS JUNCTURE, TO REITERATE OUR CONFIDENCE IN AND SUPPORT FOR CARAMANLIS' LEADERSHIP OF GREECE.

4. THE EFFORT TO LIFT THE EMBARGO HAS UNQUESTIONINGLY ERODED CARAMANLIS' LEADERSHIP POSITION HERE. IT HAS BOOSTED PAPANDREOU AND STIMULATED RIGHT WING CONSPIRATORIAL ELEMENTS TO SPECULATE THAT THE U.S. IS OUT "TO GET" THE PRIME MINISTER, THUS ENCOURAGING THEIR ACTIVITIES. THESE ARE UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCES OF A NECESSARY DECISION, HOWEVER, IF THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT MEET WITH CARAMANLIS THEY WOULD BE MAGNIFIED.

5. OTHER ARGUMENTS -- THAT THIS IS CARAMANLIS' FIRST TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES SINCE RETURNING TO GREECE IN 1974, AND A VISIT TO WHICH HE HAS LONG LOOKED FORWARD; THAT HE IS CROSSING THE ATLANTIC NOT PRIMARILY TO ATTEND THE SUMMIT BUT TO MEET THE PRESIDENT -- ARE SELF EVIDENT AND HAVE PROBABLY ALREADY BEEN CONSIDERED BY WASHINGTON. I AM HOPEFUL THAT FOR ALL THESE REASONS THE DEPARTMENT AND THE WHITE HOUSE WILL AGREE THAT A

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PRIVATE MEETING BETWEEN CARAMANLIS AND PRESIDENT CARTER IS NOT MERELY DESIRABLE BUT ESSENTIAL.

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